Interview with Mrs. Elna Wenzel
Conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson and
Miss Paula Boyer

Conducted on October 4, 1976

TAPE 1

DODSON: I wonder Mrs. Wenzel whether you would give your full name and tell us how long you have lived here in the valley.

WENZEL: Well, my full name is Elna Louise Wenzel - Freeburg Wenzel. I'm also known as Helen. Elna is a Sweedish name translated in English - it's Helen.

DODSON: And...

WENZEL: And I've lived here 81 years.

DODSON: Eighty-one years!

WENZEL: Yes. Eighty-one years and it was September the 14th.

DODSON: I think you told us that you were born here. Is that right?

WENZEL: Yes I was. I was born in Toluca Lake right on the lake. Well, the lake wasn't maybe 100 feet from where I was born. The springs of the lake and that was then a large - quite a large lake.

DODSON: I'm rather interested in that lake because now most people don't even know there was such a lake, or is such a lake. But you say it was quite large at that time?

WENZEL: Yes it was. It was quite a large lake and the water flowed out of the lake - well, it was I don't know the dimension of pipes or anything like that, but it flowed out. It was a steady stream and very - very steady and that flowed into the Los Angeles River at the crossing there at Warner Brothers. And there's where the it flowed into the Los Angeles River and Los Angeles got the water supply from that river and that lake.

DODSON: Was that the first water supply for the valley then before the Owens Aqueduct was built?

WENZEL: No. No. They had the individual windmills and then it got to where they had the the pumps that pumped the water and for irrigating and

things like that. And then Barney- he supplied the water for the residential part of the valley then. It took North Hollywood, but we had the windmill and, of course, at that kept going and then they had the pumps that would pump the water into the tanks and that way there was a steady supply all the time.

DODSON: It is my understanding that it was the water problem that really caused the valley to annex to Los Angeles to be sure that it would get enough water.

WENZEL: Well, when it was subdivided, that would be the problem there - that they had to have their water and that would be the only way of getting it was from that Owens River water that was brought into the valley. And of course, they had the big dam up there- the Sepulveda Dam I think is what they eventually called it.

DODSON: You're mentioning the Los Angeles River reminds me of a recent lawsuit we had between Glendale and Los Angeles for the water in the Los Angeles River. It was decided in favor of Los Angeles on the ground that King Charles, III,

of Spain in the Eighteenth Century had given the Pueblo of Los Angeles the rights.

WENZEL: Well...Maybe- Maybe that was so. That might be a little bit before...

DODSON: That was before your time.

WENZEL: Yeah, I think so.

DODSON: Can you tell us something about your early education in the valley? About the sort of schools that you went to or the teachers you remember or anything along that line?

WENZEL: Well, our teachers were all very good. We had wonderful teachers and they, let's see- there was Mr. Anderson. He was the principal and then we had three other ladies. There was Mrs. Grange was one of them and there was one, Mrs. Demmick, I think something like that. But we had to study and we got a lot out of our education and to graduate. Our tests came from the city - well, what would you call it? The City Board of Education.

DODSON: Just the Board of Education.

WENZEL: The Board of Education. It would be the county. And we had to pass that test before we could graduate.

DODSON: Do you remember the names of any of the text books that you used?

WENZEL: Well, I got my geography book in there. But I went- we had arithmetic, language, spelling, and geography. And that was our main studies I think - that we had. Writing, we had to go that this - ovals and we all had beautiful handwriting and that was all the text that we had.

DODSON: Do you have any feelings that you studied harder than students do now? Or the other way around?

WENZEL: Well, I don't know. (Slight pause.) We studied and I don't know - I don't think so. I wouldn't say that we did any better than the children of today. I worked in the school for 12 years so maybe- but I don't think that it was any different.

BOYER: Was it a very large school? Was it- it wasn't a one-room school house then. There was more than one room?

WENZEL: We had one, two - we had three rooms. And there was a long hall down through the center of the building and we had a library. And our library was a little bigger than this dinette here. That was what we had. And the principal of course then used the strap.

DODSON: In other words, the discipline you think was little stronger then?

WENZEL: Well, you- he kept- he kept order. And we kids respected him. And...

DODSON: He didn't use the strap on the girls now did he?

WENZEL: Well, he was strict with the girls too, but I don't remember many of them getting the strap. But I do remember one. And he- I guess he was a terror. (Some chuckles.)

DODSON: Now a days we suffer quite a bit from vandalism in the schools. Did you have it then?

WENZEL: No we didn't. No. We didn't. We had the the rest rooms were out side and we kids kept up the school yards. We picked up all the papers and things - and we had our days that we did that. And we all kept up the school yards. But the only time there was any vandalism that would go on was at Halloween. And of course then they'd go around and they would turn over all the toilets outside. That would just be about the only vandalism that I can remember. But vandalism was nothing then.

DODSON: That was in the days before inside plumbing then?

WENZEL: Yes. That was before the inside plumbing then.

DODSON: Could you give me about what year that would have been when you were in elementary school?

WENZEL: Well, I was six years old when I went into school. That would be - I was born in 1895 and six would be 1901 and then it was eight years to elementary school then.

WENZEL: So I went right through with the, at that school- the eight years. So then my sister,

she was the first, my brother, he graduated, and then my sister graduated. Well, my brother, he wanted to go on into the farming. He liked raising fruits and things and that was - he stayed on with dad and my sister Jenny - she took the horse and buggy and went to high school...Hollywood High School for four years. And she drove with the horse and buggy and she never missed a day. And that was the way with us kids when when we were in elementary school. We walked two and a half miles to school. And we'd come home, we had our little chores to do, and we would have our good times and all that, but we don't- thought nothing of it ... walking to school. And as I in that little write up in the papers, that the cattle would come through, drive herding them into Los Angeles to the market. And the sheep ... herds of sheep would come through, but but we had our times, but but then the it was just dirt roads and they would put straw on the roads to settle the dust. So...

DODSON: Was that the way they did it? Putting straw on the roads?

WENZEL: Yes. That's what they used. They did that and then they had the gravel and my Dad was foreman of the roads and he got the gravel from the, to fix the roads from, Osborne Avenue up - just up above San Fernando Road there. Up near Hansen Dam was where they got the gravel to spread to keep the dust down. And then, of course, the they would put down the asphalt roads and they took oil and settled the dust that way.

DODSON: I'm going to come back again to something you said when you mentioned the out door plumbing. When did indoor plumbing come into the valley. Do you happen to recall?

WENZEL: Well. (Slight pause.) Now, dad built the house in 1904 and we had the indoor plumbing then.

DODSON: I see. So that would mean that water manes and sewer lines had been established ...

WENZEL: But you see...

DODSON: ... by 1904.

WENZEL: ...we had our cesspools then...

DODSON: I see.

WENZEL: ...See. But there wasn't any sewers or anything like that. They had the cesspool. And then they had what they called the acetylene gas for the lights.

DODSON: Oh, I see.

WENZEL: M-m. And we had one of those. Oh, what would you call it?

DODSON: You had gas lights then? Not electricity.

WENZEL: No, it was acetylene gas. It, it was - it was a tank and dad had to take and make a formula in some way to fill that tank with this gas, whatever it was.

DODSON: I imagine electricity didn't come in 'til ten or twenty years after that did it? Commonly?

WENZEL: Well, I think when the electricity came in was the Pacific Electric when the valley you know, when the valley was developed then. I think is when electricity started coming in. Now, I wouldn't be sure of that.

DODSON: I see.

BOYER: Those tanks that your father filled with the gas. Then were they piped into the house?

WENZEL: Yes. It was piped into the house. And they were, things here like bulbs and ... things like that. And they had little - well, you know in the early days they had the gas and they had that little thing that they turned...but, this was sort of a settle in gas they called it.

BOYER: Then you'd light it? Then you'd light it with a match?

WENZEL: No.

BOYER: No?

WENZEL: No. It - it was automatic.

BOYER: Just - it would just automatically come on when you turned...

DODSON: Is that right! I don't know just how that worked then.

WENZEL: Well, it it worked.

DODSON: I'm sure it did. I'm not much of an expert on gas lighting.

WENZEL: No. No. It was - it was really something.

BOYER: You were talking about the teachers. The only other question I have was did the teachers come from the valley or were they sent out from the county? Or from...

WENZEL: They were...

BOYER: ...Los Angeles?

WENZEL: ... sent out from the co- county and then they rented rooms and lived here.

DODSON: Yeah.

WENZEL: But that's the way they had their teachers were hired. But Killion - there's Killion's place - he was the principal there with the schools for so many years and Anderson - he was the principal there when we were kids. And then I had Killion. I think it was just the two

prinicipals that we had while I was in school. And then I think Killion went on until he retired.

DODSON: Sort of curious as to know what sort of salaries they got in those days. Do you happen to know?

WENZEL: I haven't the slightest- I wouldn't know.

DODSON: I imagine they were pretty modest, but...

BOYER: Yeah.

DODSON: ...I really don't know myself what they would have been getting.

WENZEL: No. No, I - I wouldn't say because I haven't the slightest idea. But they were wonderful teachers all of them really were.

BOYER: On your higher education- like your sister went to Hol- North Hollywood? Or was it Hollywood...

WENZEL: Hollywood.

BOYER: ...the high school?

WENZEL: They didn't have a- they only had the elementary school here. You see it only went to the eighth grade. And then from the Hollywood High there was four years that was in the high school then.

BOYER: Okay.

WENZEL: Now they have a- is it seven years in the junior-? or the elementary? Then you go to the ninth grade and then to high school.

BOYER: What about college? Was there any college out here...

WENZEL: No.

BOYER: ...in the area at all?

WENZEL: No. It was they called it the normal college in Los Angeles.

BOYER: Yeah.

WENZEL: And that was up on Bunker Hill or somewheres up on near there.

BOYER: Oh.

WENZEL: But they had the city college - I forget now just what it was. That's where my sister went after she graduated from high school. She went to this business college. It was a business college there near I think it was up on Hill Street or somewheres like that.

DODSON: Can you tell us anything about what sort of social life teenagers had in those days.

WENZEL: Well, we had our little parties. We'd get together and we'd have our own parties. But we had clubs and we did different things. We went on hikes and we did a lot of craft work. Some embroidery work. We all had our cedar chess. And...

DODSON: Were those hope chess?

WENZEL: That was hope chess. And we, we stayed in at nights and, of course, we - our family we were six- five of us children and with our work on

the ranch we have our play. We made play of things. And we, - like my oldest brother had melons to cultivate and there was a little cultivator and us girls would pull it. We'd tie a rope to it and we'd pull it- to the cultivator and that way the melons got, cultivated. And, we had good times and we had like this club, we'd have meetings at one anothers homes and there was a dance we could go to. That was on the Lankershim Boulevard and well it's Magnolia now. There was a building there and we had the dance there I know. I went there and dad would take me to the dances. And it was an enjoyable life. We'd go and we'd hike. We'd climb up those hills over here. We've been up a couple of times and it was an enjoyable life.

DODSON: Can you tell us a little about those dances? What sort of dancing you did?

WENZEL: Well, I - it was just the old fashion two-step and Waltz. That's about all there was to it. That was it.

DODSON: Was square dancing popular at that time...among many people?

WENZEL: Well, yes it was. They, they had the homes - they's have their dances too like the neighbors would get together, you know, and as time went on we'd play cards, we'd get old enough to play cards...

WENZEL: ...the families would gather together and then when we got the trucks then we'd take the truck and families would go on the truck and we'd go on picnics and then Lankershim or Toluca or whatever- the trucks come in where there was transportation and then they had their yearly picnics. And there was always someway that was entertainment.

DODSON: Was the beach popular at that time among people living here in the valley?

WENZEL: Yes. I can remember Dad taking the team and wagon and taking us all the way to Redondo Beach. And then the fleet came in to Santa Monica once. And, we, took the wagon of team and went to Santa Monica to see the fleet come in...and when we had our trucks, there was a group of us went down on picnics and then we had our cars - we'd go down and go swimming. But I didn't go in swimming too much. The

waves would hit me in the- hit me in the side and I'd got side aches so- but we'd go down and then they had the plunges there at Ocean Park.

WENZEL: And Saturday nights a group of us would go down and we'd go to the plunges in the evenings. It was an enjoyable life. Very enjoyable.

BOYER: Did, did the people originally in the early days, did they get together and help other people build homes and...

WENZEL: Pardon?

BOYER: ...Did they- like, when your father built his home. Did others- did the neighbors come over and help and...?

WENZEL: No.

BOYER: No?

WENZEL: No. Dad had, a man by the name of Anderson contractor to build our home and then it was all hired out.

BOYER: Uh-huh. I see. Los Angeles was fairly well settled then. Right?

WENZEL: Well, Los Angeles was beautiful. It East Los Angeles had beautiful homes there and all the way through Adams district was just wonderful. That was more the wealthy people were there and it was just gorgeous. And Hollywood! Oh, it was gorgeous. Just beautiful. On the corner of Cahuenga and Hollywood Boulevard there was Delongpre- he was an artist and he had the most gorgeous home there. All on Hollywood Boulevard was beautiful homes. And Dad and my sister Jenny and I would go with Dad and we'd peddle apples all around in Hollywood. (Some chuckles.) But, you see, that's were we got a lot of our entertainment, you know. And that way- I can remember going with dad to peddling apples fruit on Hollywood and he treated me to an ice cream soda. I can remember that ice cream soda today.

WENZEL: The first one that- that was bought on Hollywood Boulevard and Cahuenga Avenue there by the name of Sackett had a little place there where he sold ice creams.

DODSON: Was Hollywood becoming known at that time as the center of the movie industry?

WENZEL: It started in the, Langley came to Universal City- I think in 1911 and bought the Carhart Ranch there. And, (slight pause) What was the one over on Echo Park Avenue there? I don't know- I can't remember it now, but that was when...

BOYER: Sucker? Was it Sucker? He was one of the original people from New York that came out here...

WENZEL: Yeah, and...

BOYER: ...Paramount...

WENZEL: Then Studio City there - that was (slight pause) oh what was that, Chaplin - there and I can remember hearing Bing Crosby's first audition. I was at his first audition.

BOYER: Where was that?

WENZEL: At Studio City there at the Chaplin's sister was a neighbor of mine. And she took me to, Bing Crosby's first audition.

BOYER: What did you think of him? Did you...

WENZEL: I liked...

BOYER: ...like him?

WENZEL: ...him from the very start. Yeah, he- he- he was real good. I liked him. I like him to this day.

DODSON: Another long time resident of the valley is Bob Hope.

WENZEL: Yes.

DODSON: Can you tell us something about the religious life in the valley when you were a child.

WENZEL: Well, there was the two churches. The Baptist- the Presbyterian and the the Methodist. And we went to the Methodist church. And they were close together and there were on Weddington and Bateman Avenue there. That's where the

churches were. And they were both built alike and we had wonderful ministers there and we had our social life there too. Then Reverend Hunt was one of them and he was very, very good. And then there was Dr. Boyer. He came in afterwards and he was there with the church for a long time.

BOYER: This was the Methodist church?

WENZEL: Yes, this was the Methodist church. The Presbyterian church there wasn't too active. It wasn't, but the Methodist church was quite active.

BOYER: Is that church- is that congregation around any more?

WENZEL: Yes.

BOYER: ...That one...

WENZEL: They have their church now- that first- when they left this little church, they built on the corner of McCormmick Avenue and Lankershim Boulevard right in town there. And then they

have their big Methodist church now on Tujunga across from the park down there.

BOYER: Oh-h-h.

WENZEL: They have quite a congregation there now too.

DODSON: And I imagine North in the San Fernando Valley area the Catholic church had a great many members - did it not?

WENZEL: Yes. Now it has. And see- they- let's see, where was that first church. I guess they had their first church there at Lankershim and Moorpark. They bought the property there from the people by the name of (slight pause) oh I forget now just what the name now. I had it a little while ago, but they bought it there, but that's quite the congregation there and I don't know if they have, I think they have other churches in the North Hollywood, but I think in North Hollywood that is the main one now.

DODSON: What were your vocational aims to begin with? Did you have any plans for what you wanted to do in the future?

WENZEL: Well, I got out of grammar school and I wasn't too strong. I don't know, I had a kind of a back set. They didn't know what was wrong with me. They gave me all kinds of home-made remedies, but Dad thought that being with- going to Hollywood it was quite the distance- my health to me was more than my education so he said, "You stay home with Mama." So I did liked- wanted to go on and be, a home economics teacher, but I didn't. I just stayed home.

DODSON: You went in for the home economics without the teaching. Is that it?

WENZEL: Yes, I did. And I don't know, today I'm kind of proud of my cooking and my sewing and things. I could have maybe gone on, but that way why I stayed home and helped Mother. We had this big 11 room house. And there was plenty to do to keep me busy. Dad didn't drive. He thought he didn't care too much about it so I chauffeured for my dad and helped Mother. And I was active in the, when I got of age, my dad was a Mason and I was active in the - well, I just- I was head one in the Amaranths. I was officer in the Eastern Star and we had lot of entertaining at the time with

that line. At one time we had fried chicken dinner and we had 300 at our home. And Dad- and, so that way, I was kept busy and went into Hollywood all the time for that. So, they didn't have any, well, now they have the Masonic lodge and the Eastern Star here in North Hollywood, but...

BOYER: Did they- Did they have any Job's Daughters then? In the Masonic Temple?

WENZEL: In the- North Holly- in the- they have it in the Los Angeles - or Hollywood. And my granddaughter- she was in the Job's Daughters and she's in Eastern Star now. She was eighteen when she became an Eastern Star like I did. My son, he's a Mason. Dad - he joined with the Masons and when he joined up, there wasn't any transportation - only the stagecoach and he was a member in Hollywood. And, he would take the stagecoach over in the afternoon around four o'clock and then he would walk home from the meetings. We would meet him half way with the horse and buggy.

DODSON: How long had your father lived here in the valley? When did he first come into the valley?

WENZEL: He came into the valley in 1892 and he passed away in October of 1936. He had a very interesting life. He's won medals? with his fruits that he's raised and things like that.

DODSON: We were asking you about vocational aims. Would you say that girls were a little less career minded then than they are now?

WENZEL: No. I don't think so. They didn't go in for all this that girls are going in for now. I don't think- I think that when they were young, they thought more of the home and home line.

DODSON: The womens' lib movement wasn't as strong then.

WENZEL: Yeah. And so now they want to be this- out working with the men and I don't approve of that...

BOYER: I thought you said your sister went on to school. She went on to college...

WENZEL: Yes, but she...

BOYER: ...that was really something...

WENZEL: ...Yes, they went...

BOYER: ...for then wasn't it?

WENZEL: ...you know, to college, but they were in office work...they wasn't in like they are in now. Today, you know.

BOYER: But she was in a minority then wasn't she?

WENZEL: Yes. Uh-huh.

BOYER: There wasn't very many...

WENZEL: But Jenny, she started into work, why she took, the the Pacific Electric to Los Angeles...and she got $12.00 a week for working.

BOYER: That was good then.

WENZEL: Bookkeeping.

BOYER: Yeah.

DODSON: I wonder if you can tell us about some of the historic events that you witnessed as a resident of the valley and how the valley reacted to them.
Do you recall our entry into World War I? I was asking you, Mrs. Wenzel, if you remembered our entry into World War I and how the people in the valley reacted to it.

WENZEL: Well, (slight pause) they reacted to it. I know there was a lot of the boys that went to the- into the service and I know I went out and I sold all of these bonds- these $25.00 bonds. I worked hard in that line. And during the fruit season, why there wasn't help enough. We had the Japanese and then they had the older men. They called them the "half-century" men. -Over fifty.

BOYER: Oh.

WENZEL: They came and worked and then- I know I had to do work that then- you know. My youngest brother was too young to go to the market alone with the big truck, so dad would be going with him to the market and there would be nobody at home, so Mother and I- we to kind of take over-

you know, and see that things, you know, started in the mornings and fruit was taken care of and all like that. But when the war was ended, the first World War, my dad and brother, and sister were up in Bakersfield and I can see mother today when she come running in and she said, "Oh Helen" she said. "The war is over." She had done- but in Bakersfield, of course, where we were then, why there was no celebrating or anything like that. But, in the towns up by Bakersfield it was quite, you know, something- they were shooting guns and one thing or another. But that was World War I. But, World War II, why, that was quite exciting, I know. My sister and I went to Hollywood and people were just going wild. Why my son was in World War II. And his- he was in the Navy and he was on the U.S.S. Ward. That was the first ship to fire when the Japs struck Pearl Harbor. And the year to the day why one of these- what do you call them- suicide planes.

DODSON: Kamikaze?

WENZEL: Yeah. It struck at his ship and hit right under his station and he was sent home -

discharged. But that was quite exciting when World War II was over with. So, anyway, that was something.

DODSON: Was he in the Navy before the war began or afterwards?

WENZEL: He was in the- he joined up on his 17th birthday. And he was sent over right away to Guada Canal. And he was right into it.

BOYER: Yeah.

DODSON: He certain was if he was sent to Guada Canal to begin with.

WENZEL: Well, that was- well, they sent him and when he enlisted, he wanted to be a mechanic or whatever you might call it. But they made a cook out of him. (Some chuckles by all.) And when he was called to his station on the- when this suicide plane was around, why they was fighting that off with quite a while and all that he had one was his shoes and shorts and he had his key to his- what do you call it- his commissary on this string around his neck.

BOYER: Oh.

WENZEL: And he jumped into the ocean- that was it.

BOYER: They bombed his ship - they bombed his ship then?

WENZEL: They struck the ship right under his station. It threw him and he was sent home physically discharged.

DODSON: Do you recall anything about the sort of shortages of things that developed during the First or Second World Wars? During the first one, do you recall whether things were in short supply?

WENZEL: Well, there was meat and things like that and I was going through things the other day and I found some of our stamps that we had. So it was a shortage of things. That was in well, I guess it was any shortage in World War I- I don't think there was- it was World War II.

DODSON: I think we used the ration stamps in the Second World War.

WENZEL: Yes...

DODSON: Were there any stamps...

WENZEL: ...That was when...

DODSON: ...in World War I?

WENZEL: No.

DODSON: I don't think so.

WENZEL: No. No. There wasn't any stamps. It was the Second World War that the stamps- that I know of- because I have the book of the stamps. But we managed to get along.

DODSON: You didn't feel, or at least you don't remember now any particular of shortages that developed in the First World War.

WENZEL: No, I don't think so. I don't think there was any thing in the First World War- that I can recall. I know of the only thing that I can- no, I don't think there was anything.

DODSON: Of course there wouldn't have been the same demand for things like gasoline for instance as...

WENZEL: No.

DODSON: ...in the Second World War.

WENZEL: No, no, no. There wasn't anything like that, you know, that it was the foods that was the shortage then. I think of different foods that was of the shortage.

DODSON: I think you told us something about your recollections of the bringing of water into the valley. You were present when the first water came into the valley over the Owens aqueduct?

WENZEL: Yes it was. It was quite a crowd there and it was quite thrilling to see that water come through. I can remember that. And very distinctly and it was quite a crowd there and I know they gave us all samples of water and I had mine. Oh, I don't know how long I had mine, and then I don't know what happened to it, and then one time, dad took us to Oxnard and they had the sugar factory up there and we

went through the sugar factory because, see then in Oxnard they raised a lot of the sugar beets...and they had the sugar factory there and they gave us little bags of sugar. But it was quite thrilling.

DODSON: Do you remember Mr. Mulholland?

WENZEL: Yes. I don't - Dad knew him personally, but we kids didn't have the, you know, the meeting or anything, but dad had and knew him quite well. But he knew all of them in them in the valley- there was Chandler and Whitsett and Whitley, and all of them he knew well, Warner - all of them, but we kids, we- we knew of them but personally, why, I can remember them all...but that was as far as it goes.

DODSON: Did Mr. Mulholland speak on that occasion? When the water first came through or do you recall?

WENZEL: I don't recall. I imagine he- he was there- no, it seems to me they had some kind of a- but I don't recall at all, it's-.

DODSON: Another thing which has been current in the valley for early times has been earthquakes. I

was surprised to find out that some people could remember the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 - that they felt that here in the valley. Do you recall feeling that?

WENZEL: I- I sure do. And it was a dark dreary day and on this- picture this school, they had the front entrance and they had a side entrance and we girls were sitting on the steps playing jacks.. and we felt the quakes then.

DODSON: I was surprised to find that it was felt this far south - this far away from San Francisco.

WENZEL: Yes it was. And then we had other shakes and I know this big three ton Marman truck was loaded with fruit and that has- just moved that truck back and forth. And then this- last one we had, I got a good shaking then.

DODSON: That's the Sylmar quake.

WENZEL: Yeah. That- that was a good one. I'll- I'll never forget that one. But we've had our earthquakes and this last one I was in bed and, and I'm telling you- I had a big heavy maple bed and that bed just went from one thing to

the other side to the other and my house- all my nice antique things were all broken and it was quite a shake. I lived here in the apartment over here upstairs and it seemed like I got the worst of any of them living around here. It was- was center of the apartment and I don't know, I really got it.

DODSON: We interviewed one lady who has a lot of valuable china. She has it all glued to the top of her tables so in the next earthquake not a piece is going to be thrown off onto the floor and broken.

WENZEL: Yeah, I think I- I should have kept some of mine. I know I have what they call the chocolate set. I got that chocolate set when I was 10 years old and it broke the lid to the pot and I'm just sick over that.

BOYER: What's that- what is a chocolate set?

WENZEL: It's a little tiny- like a demitasse?...cut and it's - you can go over there and look at it. It's up on the top of the ice box.

BOYER: Did you, did everybody used to get those when they were younger?

WENZEL: Pardon?

BOYER: Did all the girls get that?

WENZEL: No. I just got it for a birthday present.

BOYER: Really?

WENZEL: That was one of the presents that I got and that had to be broken and that hurt.

DODSON: Do you recall whether the San Francisco quake did any damage this far south? Did it just give you a shake, but not do any damage?

WENZEL: No, it didn't do any damage. It just gave you a good shake. But you knew that it was there.

DODSON: And, how about the Long Beach quake that I think was 1933, was it not?

WENZEL: Well, that was a good one. I know I was living out- Chandler Boulevard there at the time just this side of and there was a chicken ranch next

door and the chicken just went up flying, and the trees just- oh, and the dust was something terrible. We got a good shake then. It was a good one. But the others - the - that we had earlier wasn't as severe as they are getting to be now.

DODSON: You feel that the '71 Sylmar quake was the hardest one you felt- the most severe.

WENZEL: Yes. Uh-huh. But the Long Beach one- that one was '33?

DODSON: I think so.

WENZEL: Yeah. Well, that was the strong one. I know it was really a strong one, but this last one was the worst one that we've had. That was the worst.

DODSON: Can you think of some other historical event that we haven't mentioned that made quite an impression on you. Something you think was quite important in the history of this area.

WENZEL: Well, I don't know they had the old Dutch oven- well, it's just below the hotel over there at Universal City. Shana?

BOYER: Sheraton?

WENZEL: Sheraton. And they destroyed that. And that stood there for so long. And I think that should have been kept.

BOYER: Was it a- was it a restaurant or a?

WENZEL: No. It was just an outside...oven that they had, see? But the tree? was on across the street there- and this dutch oven was there. And, I don't know, it just seemed like it and then the trench that they bought over there it was on the hill that Universal City- at the back of the Universal City and that was two of the things from them when the studio was signed.

DODSON: What exactly was the dutch oven?

WENZEL: Well, it was made out of stone and it was well- they- other things. It was open and it was...

BOYER: Large?

WENZEL: Well, it- it was like this, you know. Maybe it stood so high...and it was right there at the point. And it was down low where they could have saved it.

BOYER: And Universal covered up both the pass and...

WENZEL: It- it's all...

BOYER: ...the dutch oven.

WENZEL: ...been destroyed. Yes. It's all been destroyed. But see, they were going over the pass, why into Newhall, you know, that entrance there, why they put up a bell or something there you know, and it- it- some little thing could have been put up.

BOYER: And what- and what tree was this exactly now?

WENZEL: Well, that was the Freemont, and Pico were fighting in here. They came through somewhere - that was it.

BOYER: And that was the same General Freemont that your father worked for right?

WENZEL: No. That..

BOYER: No?

WENZEL: ...that was General Foreman.

BOYER: General Foreman.

WENZEL: Foreman- Foreman, yes.

DODSON: You recall the Great Depression that broke in 1929 and lasted for some years thereafter. Do you recall how that might have affected your family or the valley in general?

WENZEL: Well, that affected the family terribly. My dad lost very heavily in that and see, everything that he had he- he had been subdivided - a lot of it and it desessment and everything was cut up into lots and he had to take it back and and of course that made it kind of bad, but he lost very heavily. And others had lost too that had worked so hard and

to save their money and all, but my dad lost very heavily.

DODSON: Many people lost money in their bank accounts and their savings accounts...

WENZEL: Yes.

DODSON: ...and all of that.

WENZEL: All- all of it. It was quite a sad situation. Very sad.

DODSON: Do you recall whether we had very many people on relief... here in the valley during that period?

WENZEL: No. I don't think that people were unruly like they are today. They managed to get by. They got by without any relief.

DODSON: Uh-huh. Do you have any recollections of widespread unemployment in the valley during that period?

WENZEL: Then it wasn't- well, they really didn't have too many factories here where it would be so

noticeable, so that I couldn't say, you know, much about it.

DODSON: M-m. What would you say has been the greatest change in the valley during your life time?

WENZEL: The biggest change? Well, one big change was when they paved the road from Hollywood out here.

DODSON: I could imagine that it did make a change.

WENZEL: Yes, I think that was the biggest change right along with going over all the bumps. That was just an old dirt road.

BOYER: Did more people move out to the valley after it was paved?

WENZEL: Yes. And and then, they more automobiles, cars came out and they would come out this way, you know, for to see the valley- it was a beautiful valley...and it was a really a sight-seeing when all the trees were all in bloom and everything. It was absolutely beautiful. And the evening. Oh, the fragrance of the blossoms

and all. It was just wonderful - just wonderful.

DODSON: Can you tell us what sort of things were growing in the valley at that time?

WENZEL: What things? Well, there was peaches, apricots, plums, melons, corn, anything that you want. Anything that you'd want. I know my brother had asparagus - 10 acres of asparagus and then my dad had all these melons and we had every- just about everything that could be raised. And they had I know in the earlier days they had pumpkins. Honest to goodness they were great big things. It was all a man could do was to lift those pumpkins.

DODSON: I think we have a picture of those showing...

WENZEL: Yes.

DODSON: ...how large they were.

WENZEL: ...were on the train and it was- everything was just wonderful then. They had so much fruit and things.

BOYER: I'm sorry. Were there very many wild animals out here in the valley?

WENZEL: Well, in the early days the Coyotes were bad and they- I know- I don't know where it ever come from, but my brother Ed would go hunting. That was when we were on General Foreman's place and there on the lake, I don't know where it ever come from, but a big Bob cat came and it was there and my brother shot it. And, I can see him coming home to this day with his little bib overalls on and he got Dad and Dad went with him to go back to see if the thing was still alive or not and that animal took and tanned the hide and we had that hide for I don't know how long. But that's only the real out of sight of coyotes that we'd have of wild animals. That was- all that I could ever remember.

BOYER: Did they- did the coyotes come down and ruin any of your orchards?

WENZEL: Oh yes. The coyotes would come right up to the house and we had Genny hens and peacocks. the Genny hens were quite the watch dogs and when we knew they were around, why those Genny hens

would make an awful noise. Peacocks would make noise and that's the worse of any animals and the skunks were bad. But there wasn't any wild animals at all. A lot of snakes, but there wasn't what you'd call poisonous or anything like that.

DODSON: The rattle snake wasn't common here in the valley then?

WENZEL: No. No, it wasn't. I didn't hear of a rattle snake until oh, I don't know, when- there wasn't snakes like that. I know there was snakes red racers and they were long pink snakes, but they were kind of bad, but there wasn't anything that we had to worry about with snakes.

DODSON: What do you think of the change of fashion between the time when you were a child and now? Do you feel there's been a drastic change there?

WENZEL: Well, the drastic change is now is that we wear the pants.

DODSON: Do you think that's good or bad?

WENZEL: Well, it's alright I think. I know we had a ranch up on Victory Boulevard and we had strawberries and things like that. We had strawberries and I know then I was going to get me some overalls or something. I was stooping and a lot of men around and so, Dad didn't approve of it, so let the men wear the pants, but I did get a kind of a bib pants and overalls and we had 22 pickers of strawberries and that was on Victory Boulevard there between Whitsett and Coldwater Canyon.

DODSON: Do you disapprove of modern fashions?

WENZEL: No. They're alright. I go along with it. Some of it is kind of extreme, but they want that, why, it's up to the individual. It's, you know. Some people can wear it and others can't.

DODSON: We have fads marked down here to ask you about. Were there any fads in your day that you remember that have gone out of style since?

WENZEL: Any what?

DODSON: Fads. F-A-D-S (spelled out for Mrs. Wenzel.)

WENZEL: Fads? Oh, what would it be.

DODSON: Well, now for instance, college students have gone from one thing to another. There was a period when they were swallowing live gold fish and another period when they were seeing how many could get in one telephone booth and that sort of thing. Did you have anything like that? That you can remember?

WENZEL: No. We didn't have anything like that...that I can think of.

DODSON: That was one thing you didn't go in for then.

WENZEL: No, I didn't go in for that. No, I'm afraid not.

DODSON: How would you compare morality now with the morality when when you were a teenager?

WENZEL: Well, I don't know. It what to say about that? I don't approve with a lot of it but I don't know what to say.

DODSON: Now a days, there's quite a problem in regard with narcotics. Would you say that there was

any narcotics or drug problem when you were in school?

WENZEL: No. We didn't have anything like that. We didn't have anything like that at all. The only thing that well, it's not too many years ago that when this glue sniffling and all of that came in, but I was at the school then and I, one girl on the- in school I felt sorry for she really ended up sniffling glue and I went to the head office and had to turn her in and that was about the saddest thing I ever did do. She was sent into the juvenile hall and she had sniffed glue so that she couldn't be helped. And I know that it broke my heart that I had found her and turned her in, but the principal? came to me and told me that not to feel badly, that I had done them a great thing that I had found the girl. But that was about the saddest thing I ever went through in that line.

DODSON: You say there was no particular use of narcotics. What about alcohol? Was that commonly used? Was there any drunkenness or much drunkenness?

WENZEL: Well, sometimes they would get kind of out of line, but I know when we were at church at nights sometimes, the drunks would come to the church and stand off on the front porch and all that, but it wasn't populated so that if they did get drunk, why there wasn't any injuries or anything, you know, so- I don't know, it wasn't like it is today.

DODSON: How do you feel about the general crime situation? Did you feel safer then than now? Or the other way around?

WENZEL: No. We wasn't afraid at all. And I know on Saturday nights lots of times we girls would go into Los Angeles and we'd go to the show and we'd come home and we'd land over in Universal City there and we'd walk home all the way to- to- Valley Spring Lane. Now, you know where that is? It's where the golf course is. We wasn't afraid one bit. And you couldn't do it today. Why you'd be scared- to death.

BOYER: Yeah.

WENZEL: I don't go outside at all at night.

BOYER: That's...

DODSON: Many people have told me that that's the case- that they don't dare take walks at night...

WENZEL: No.

DODSON: ...or anything like that.

WENZEL: I wouldn't think that going out and taking a walk for anything.

DODSON: But you did feel free to take a walk if you wanted to when you were a girl?

WENZEL: We were free to go out and right. Now with this club that we had- we girls, we took the mules and the little flat bed and we went way out up into the wash up on the- way up above Dam Owen there. And there was seven of us and we didn't think nothing of it - going out at night you now. But today you- I don't know if they all like it or not, but the teenagers and younger people, but when you get up in years, why it seems so that you have to live in fear. It's too bad that you have to be that way.

DODSON: Do you think there's any explanation for that change that you know of? What would you attribute the change to?

WENZEL: That I wouldn't know. Actually, I don't think that the there's enough home life like what we had that they'd have at home and that they don't have enough to keep themselves busy. Now we kids- we had things that we had to do and we kept busy.

WENZEL: And our home life with Mother and Dad would sit with us and play cards and we'd play games. But since television has come in I think it's kind of- now, I might be wrong, but I don't think that the home life is what it should be.

DODSON: Do you think the family was a tighter knit unit when you were a teenager than it is now?

WENZEL: Well, I don't know just what to say. I don't know what has caused it all, but, it I don't know. It's just too bad. I hate to think of it. I don't say that- there's a lot of good kids, you know, they're not all bad.

DODSON: No.

WENZEL: You know, there's- we got wonderful kids today. And why some of these pop up - you know. I don't know what it is that causes it, but it's too bad.

DODSON: Is there anything in the history of the valley that thinking back over it brings you particular feelings of happiness or satisfaction?

WENZEL: Well, I don't know. I don't know what to say on that. There's been so much that I- I wouldn't know what to say, but there's been a big change and it's been a beautiful life that I've gone through and all and there's been many wonderful memories, but that's all I can say that about it.

DODSON: Is there anything in the history of the valley that you regard as a special disaster that you regret seeing happen?

WENZEL: Well, that was the the flood in 1938.

DODSON: Can you describe that flood? I don't think anyone has described it to us. Do you remember it clearly?

WENZEL: Well, I do. Very much so. It...we lived in on Acama Street in North Hollywood and I had trouble with my eyes and it was...

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